

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

FOR THE

NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

ABELLANOSA, JOANNA, et al.,

Civil Action No. 05-0010

Plaintiffs,

DECLARATION IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS'
OPPOSITION TO

v.

DEFENDANT'S MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGMENT

L&T INTERNATIONAL
CORPORATION,

Defendant.

I, Helen L. Cruz, hereby declare as follows:

1. I am over the age of eighteen years old, have personal knowledge of the facts set forth herein, am competent to testify as to these facts if called as a witness in a court of law, and if called would testify as stated herein.
2. I am a citizen of the Republic of the Philippines. I was hired by L&T International Corporation as a nonresident contract worker, to work in the position of Hand Packer in March, 2004.
3. On or about February, 2004, I went to L&T to apply for an advertised job vacancy for hand packers. After filling-up and turning in the application form, I was told that L&T will call me for further information.
4. After several days, an L&T personnel who identified herself as Baby Lopez, called me up for interview. When I reported to L&T, a certain Cory Quing and Amy Tse conducted the interview.

I.

MEDICAL FEES

(Physical Examination Fee

and Health Certificate Fee)

5. After I passed the interview, Baby Lopez asked me to complete the Consensual Transfer documents and have my employer complete and sign them, which I did. I gave the completed consensual transfer documents to Baby Lopez at the HR office. Baby Lopez then asked for and I gave her my health certificate which she noted had not yet expired. She then told me that L&T would use my health certificate from my then employer.

II.

CONTRACT SIGNING

6. My first non-resident contract was in 2003. My former employer used and had me sign a standard form labor contract provided by DOL. I became familiar with the basic terms of the DOL standard form contract. A copy of such standard form contract is attached as Exhibit "2" to Plaintiffs' Amended Opposition.

7. In 2004, when L&T HR staff Baby Lopez handed me their contract form, with only the signature page showing, and insisting that I sign, I had no reason to believe it was not the standard DOL form contract. Prior to signing this L&T contract form and at the time it was presented to me in the HR for signing, I was not given an opportunity to read the contract before signing it. When it was presented to me in the HR office, Baby Lopez showed only the signature page, and pointed to where I was to sign it, and said sign, which I did without reading it. There were many other applicants present and waiting in line. The HR staff was rushing me and other applicants by insisting that I and the other applicants I saw present, hurry up and quickly sign, without delaying the document processing. From the mood and way the HR staff was acting, I was made fearful that if I didn't just sign the signature page as instructed, I would lose the job opportunity especially since none of the other applicants I saw there held up the line by or took time to read the contract document. I observed the HR staff acting the same way with other workers who signed before and after my turn. Neither Baby Lopez, nor any one else, ever showed me my contract document until the time and date they asked me (us) to sign at HR. I was never given a copy of the L&T contract document I signed before my termination on or about May 13, 2004. After my termination, I was surprised when I later learned of some of the terms and conditions in L&T's self-styled contract. Had I known that L&T's self-styled contract contained terms restricting me from being employed with other competing companies in Saipan and allowing L&T to terminate me at any time as a reduction in force, I would not have agreed to it or signed it.

III.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

8. There was no individualized measurement or testing to determine my or each Packer's individual performance or production. The only production measurement or test was done by counting the output (production) from each of the different lines of Packers. There was really no way for me as an individual packer to control or show an increase in the number of products because I was just one individual on the line with many others. In the packing section our work was performed by groups of workers on so-called lines. The packages or items we were assigned to work on often varied from day to day. Our Head Supervisor in the packing section was Li, Zhi Min, who is a Chinese. When I and other Filipino workers tried to ask her questions regarding our work she could not answer nor explain because she does not speak English fluently. (See Defendant's Response to Plaintiffs' First Set of Request for Interrogatories No. 49a).

IV.

TERMINATION

9. I was employed and worked for L&T International Corporation as a hand packer, from on or about March 2004 to May 13, 2004, when I and other workers in the hand packing section were summoned by the calling of our individual names over the public address system, to report to the human resources (HR)

office. I believe and understand we were called in two batches, one about 3:00 p.m., and one about 5:00 p.m. (See Deposition of Jack Torres, page 97, lines 14-17).

10. I did not know why we were being called to come to HR. I thought that we were being called regarding receipt of ATM Cards that L&T had previously given to us and had some of us fill out an application for as they workers present, to make it easier and more convenient for (us) workers to access and get our anticipated bi-weekly wage payments without having to stand in line waiting for and trying to cash payroll checks. I was made more assured of my continued employment and anticipated pay check by L&T having asked me and other workers to set up these ATM accounts to facilitate our anticipated payroll check payments.

11. As we arrived at the designated meeting room, I observed other workers, and Corazon Quing, Malou Ernest and Rhodora Bernabe, known to us as HR staff, were present at the May 13, 2004 meeting.

12. I did not see or hear Corazon Quing read or reading from any document or the so-called "communication plan" as described and stated in Exhibit "A" attached to the Declaration of Corazon Quing.

13. More specifically, I (we) were not told as stated by Corazon Quing that we the workers, had the right to appeal our termination to the "Legal Department" of L&T or to any one else.

14. Neither Malou Ernest, Corazon Quing nor any one else at the May 13, 2004 meeting, informed us, that the purpose of the so-called second check was "to cover for 10 days pay in lieu of notice," as stated in paragraph 7, Declaration of Corazon Quing. Additionally, L&T's own RIF policy required, as proposed RIF workers, that I (we) "shall be given written notice of separation at least 15 days prior to the effective date of separation, or severance pay in lieu of notice," (See Ex. "D," Jack Torres' Deposition, and page 88, lines 6-8 and lines 20-24).

15. It was my honest belief that I and my co-workers were terminated on May 13, 2004 and that the termination was effective immediately on and from May 13, 2004, because I (we) were told by HR staff at the May 13, 2004 meeting that today (May 13, 2004) was our last day of employment and they demanded that we give up and turn in our company ID cards which were required and needed for company employees to freely enter company premises; and more importantly, our I.D.s were swipe-cards for the time-clocks so we could not clock in or out without them, in addition to being required to "turn over any and all company properties in your possession... on or before May 13, 2004" as stated in the Notice of Termination. See Ex. "D," Defendant's Memorandum.

16. As a result I believed and felt that I was terminated and forced to stop working on May 13, 2004, the same date that the Notice of Termination (dated May 12, 2004) was given to me. Hence, I was not given the required prior notice of termination and/or of the RIF.

17. I and the other plaintiffs worked a set work schedule and shift, and worked Monday through Saturday, seven (7) hours a day, six (6) days a week, for a total of forty-two (42) hours each work week, which included two (2) hour overtime each work week while employed at L&T.

18. At the time of my termination, no one from L&T offered to assist me in finding other employment or told me that they would or could assist me in getting work with affiliate companies of L&T.

V.

EMOTIONAL DISTRESS

19. When our termination was announced we were all shocked because it was unexpected and we did not know the reason why we were suddenly terminated. The way L&T broke the news of termination to us, not individually or privately, but *en masse* in front of all the other employees, resulted in wailing, crying and shouting and pandemonium among the workers present. I and the other workers present were hugging each other and trying to console one another.

20. I felt angry toward L&T and the people behind our hiring. I felt insulted and discriminated against. I became very emotionally upset and disturbed as a result of the termination of my employment at L&T. My anxiety increased, I keep on thinking and worrying about the future of my family.

21. As my emotional distress was mounting, I kept to myself and never went out of my room. I felt so ashamed to go out. My blood pressure goes up every time I remember those responsible people for and the event of my termination.

22. I felt physically and emotionally drained as a result of severe emotional distress caused by the termination of L&T. As my work experience with L&T was a nightmare, I decided to go back to the Philippines.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct and that this declaration was executed this 28th day of September, 2006.

/s/ 

Helen L. Cruz

Declarant